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S P E E C H

O F *K*
Mr. B E A U F O R,

TUESDAY, THE 18th JUNE, 1788,

I N A
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE,

O N A
B I L L

FOR REGULATING THE
CONVEYANCE OF NEGROES

F R O M

Africa to the West-Indies.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
O B S E R V A T I O N S

O N T H E

E V I D E N C E

ADDUCED AGAINST THE

B I L L.

L O N D O N.

PRINTED BY J. PHILLIPS, GEORGE-YARD, LOMBARD-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXXIX.

SEP 18 1864

RECEIVED

COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE

THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE
ST. MARTIN'S LANE
LONDON W.C.



RECEIVED

SEP 18 1864

**COMMITTEE of the SOCIETY instituted
in 1787, for the Purpose of effecting the
Abolition of the SLAVE TRADE.**

ALTHOUGH the act passed last session for regulating the conveyance of negroes, did not aim at the point to which the attention of the Society has been invariably directed, viz. The Abolition of the Slave Trade ; yet as the arguments offered in support of the bill and the evidence produced in opposition to it, tended greatly to promote their design, by strengthening the general reasoning in favour of their great object, the Committee think themselves fortunate in having been able to prevail on the members whose Speech and Remarks follow, to permit their publication.

By Order of the Committee,

G. SHARP, Chairman.

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By Order of the Committee,

C. SHARP, Chairman.

(THE)

S P E E C H

OF

Mr. BEAUFORT,

ON TUESDAY, JUNE THE 18th,

ON A BILL FOR REGULATING THE

CONVEYANCE OF NEGROES.

THE remarks of the * noble Lord in support of the veracity of the witnesses whom the friends of the African trade have thought fit to call to your bar, I am not inclined to dispute. Their evidence is clear, the facts they have established are important, and the natural conclusions from these facts, however opposite to those which they intended should be drawn, are, in my judgment, decisive on the case. On this occasion two questions arise.

* Lord Penrhyn.

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The

The first is—Whether in the present mode of transporting to the West Indies the negroes which are purchased in Africa, such abuses exist as require the restrictions of law ?

The second is—Whether the restrictions which this bill proposes to enact will, or will not, amount to an abolition of the trade ?

These are the two points to which the counsel, who pleaded this day at your bar in behalf of the African merchants, directed his principal attention, and they do in reality comprehend the whole of the business now before us.

In his arguments on the first of these points, the counsel declared that the appellation of abuse could only be given to such a mode of conveyance as is dangerous to the lives or health of the negroes. I accept his definition, narrow as it is, and shall make it the basis of my reasoning.

To

To the question then, "Is the present mode of transportation compatible with a due regard to the lives and health of the Africans," what has been the evidence at your bar?—what the language of the witnesses? They told you, that five feet in length, and sixteen inches in breadth, was as much as their practice, upon an average, allotted to each slave: that this space was all the room they could allow for the African and his irons; and that in order to accommodate him to this extent, which they described as liberal, recourse is had to every possible contrivance. In the first place, the lower deck is entirely covered with bodies: in the next, the height between the floor of that deck, and the roof above (a height which they acknowledge seldom amounts to five feet eight inches, and sometimes does not exceed four feet) is divided by a platform, which is also covered with bodies. Thus the distance from the floor on which some of the Africans are laid, to the platform on which others are spread, is but two feet

in many cases, and but two feet and a few inches in the rest ; and from the platform to the upper deck, which constitutes the roof, there is but a similar space. The same ingenuity of package and perfection of contrivance is employed, according to the witnesses account, in filling every other part of the vessel, in which a human body can be stowed. Such is the mode of conveyance.

Now what, from the evidence of the witnesses at the bar, (an evidence given with reluctance, on a cross examination, and therefore of decisive credibility) is the effect of that conveyance on the lives and healths both of the negroes and the seamen ? “ I do confess ” (says one of the witnesses) “ that when I was master of “ the Tartar, I lost in one voyage a third “ of my seamen, and 120 negroes, which “ was also a third of the whole.” Was this the total of your loss ? “ I cannot say “ it was ; 12 negroes perished by an accident : they were drowned.” Had you
no

no other mortality except that of the 120 negroes, and that of the 12? "No other
 " upon the voyage: but I lost between
 " 20 and 30 negroes before I left the
 " coast."—Thus it appears, that 120 Africans, being a third of the whole, died upon the voyage, that 12 more were drowned, and that from 20 to 30 more were devoured by different diseases before his cargo was completed. Such is the evidence of one of the witnesses at your bar; yet the very counsel who called that witness, asserts that no abuses deserving the notice of parliament, none which endanger the lives, or affect the health, of the negroes, exist in the African trade. The counsel indeed, who is paid by his clients, and who does not conceive that his honour is pledged to the truth of his arguments, or his character concerned in the justice of his cause, may think himself at liberty to contradict the common feelings, and affront the common sense of mankind. But I cannot persuade myself that such of the members of this house as

have hitherto opposed the bill will venture on the same desperate assertions. On this point of mortality, what is the language of the other witnesses? Though interested in the trade, and parties against the bill, their confession is, that of the negroes of the *Windward Coast*, who are men of the strongest constitutions of any which Africa affords, no less, on an average, than five in each hundred perish in the voyage, a voyage it must be remembered of but *six weeks* continuance. In a twelvemonth then, what must be the proportion of the dead? no less than 43 in every hundred; seventeen times the usual rate of mortality: for all the estimates of life suppose, and Dr. Price expressly declares, that, except in very particular situations (of which, as we find from the history of Captain Cook's voyages, the sea is not one) no more than a fortieth of the people, or two and a half in the hundred die within the space of a year.—Such then is the comparison.—In the ordinary course of nature, the
number

number of persons (including those in age and infancy, the weakest periods of existence) who perish in the course of a twelve-month is at the rate of but two and a half in a hundred ; but in an African voyage, notwithstanding the old are excluded, and few infants are admitted ; notwithstanding the people are in the firmest period of life, the list of deaths presents an annual mortality of forty-three in a hundred. It presents this mortality even in vessels from the *Windward Coast* of Africa, but in those of *Bonny, Benin, and the Calabars*, from whence the greatest proportion of the slaves are brought, the mortality is increased by a variety of causes, of which the greater length of the voyage is one, and is said to be twice as large ; which supposes that in every hundred the deaths annually amount to no less than eighty-six. Yet even the former comparatively low mortality, of which the counsel speaks with satisfaction as a proof of the kind and compassionate treatment of the slaves, even this indolent and lethar-

gick destruction, gives to the march of death seventeen times its usual speed. It is a destruction which if general but for *ten years* would depopulate the world, blast the purposes of its creation, and extinguish the human race. After these proofs of the horrors of an African voyage, what shall we think of the persons who have the confidence to tell you, that the conveyance of the Africans from their native land is a mercantile concern with which you should not interfere; and while they presumptuously caution you against an officious intermeddling, likewise tell you that you cannot be judges of the subject?

“ You form (says the counsel) your opinion of the feelings of the negroes by those that belong to yourselves; a mistaken and inapplicable test: for though in their situation you might be miserable, yet to them the circumstances of the voyage are not inconsistent with comfort or happiness.” Stronger still upon this point, is the language of the witnesses,

witnesses. We, whose feelings have never known the hardening influence of an African sun, naturally thought, that if a man, be his complexion what it may, be suddenly torn from his family and friends, and be violently wrenched from his native soil, his suffering must be great; and that if to these afflictions be added the perpetual loss of freedom, his misery must be intense. "Just the reverse" (say the witnesses) "the direct contrary is the fact; the voyage from Africa is the "happiest period of his life." I should almost be tempted to conclude from the evidence at the bar, that the fetters on the hands of the Africans, and the irons on their feet, are intended to check the wild expressions of tumultuous and frantick joy, rather than to counteract the gloomy purposes of despair. Some of us imagined, that when to the burning atmosphere of the torrid zone, is added the suffocating heat of numbers crowded into a narrow space, the suffering must be dreadful;

ful : but here again we were mistaken ; so much so indeed, that the counsel treated the very idea as ridiculously delicate and finical ; and the witnesses say, that the additional warmth is the very thing which the Africans desire ; they accept it as a boon ; they solicit it as an enjoyment. One would think from the evidence at the bar, and from the arguments of the counsel upon it, that the solid pestilence, the thick contagion, the substantial rottenness of an African ship is congenial to the constitution, and exhilarating to the spirits of a negro. Could any thing add to the indignation we feel at *such a trade, conducted in such a way*, it would be the *preposterous arguments by which that trade is defended*.—Among the gentlemen who oppose this bill there are some who think its operations unfriendly to our West India settlements ; yet even they, when they heard from the witnesses (whose testimony often acquired additional strength from the reluctance with which it was given) the ravages of this remorseless trade, even they

they must, I am confident, have felt an earnest wish that the necessity of the traffick did not exist. May I then be permitted to point out to the West India settlements, not presumptuously, but with anxious and ardent wishes for their welfare, a line of conduct that would soon supersede the necessity of the negro traffick, and promote, at the same time, the interest of the planters? I think with them that in all regulations for the remedy of evils of great magnitude, and of long establishment, especially of those, with the existence of which the rights of property are blended, the spirit of reform should be guided by a temperate and well advised zeal, that considers what is *attainable* as well as what is *desirable*, and confines its efforts to *practicable good*. I also think with them, that in all such regulations of the African trade for negroes as are not, like those of the present bill, confined to the mode of their conveyance, the provincial legislatures of our West India settlements should undertake the conduct of the business.

business. Now if, as the wisest maxims of policy suggest, those legislatures should impose a tax on every negro imported, and should grant a countervailing premium on creole negroes, born in the West Indies, and produced in a healthy state at the age of ten years, the necessity of new importations would speedily be removed. Especially if in aid of these regulations (the efficacy of which might otherwise be retarded by negroes illicitly imported) a register of slaves should be established, and a provision made, that all who are not enrolled shall be absolutely free. To the provincial assemblies who shall thus destroy the asserted necessity, and therefore the existence of the traffick in human beings, immortal honour will be due ; and still more ample will be their fame, should they add to the liberal policy of this measure the wise and generous expedient of raising their negroes from a state of slavery to that of regulated vassalage : they will then be revered as the distinguished instructors of their country, and as the friends

friends and benefactors of human kind.—But I have wandered too far from the immediate subject of debate.—In the outset of my argument I observed, that the counsel has not only attempted to shew that the sufferings of the negroes in their passage are merely ideal, and the mortality too trifling for notice, but that the present bill, in professing to regulate, would really abolish the trade. With what success he has attempted to establish his first proposition I have already examined; the other remains to be considered.

The bill proposes to enact, that the number of Africans who shall be carried in any vessel, shall be restricted by a rule, that is founded on the joint consideration, of the size of the vessel, and the accommodations with which it is furnished. A more reasonable proposition, or one, that in imposing a restraint on the eagerness of avarice, more effectually consults the interests of the merchant; is not perhaps to be found in the polity of nations. Yet these

these provisions the witnesses object to as ruinous to their trade: For the French, say they, our rivals in the African commerce, will be subject to no restraint; and as the merchant best understands the nature of his own concern, and the mode of conducting it to advantage, *their freedom* opposed to *our restraint* will give them an undoubted superiority; a superiority that will be rendered still more decisive by the bounty which the French government bestows.—Such are the arguments of the counsel and the witnesses.

To their first remark “that the merchant best understands the means of commercial profit,” my answer is, that avarice, though always an eager, is not always a clear sighted and well judging passion. For under its government the probability of exorbitant loss is often risked on the slightest prospect of exorbitant gain, and therefore it is, that in the African trade, a lottery of the worst species, the rules of prudence are often as much neglected

lected as the rights of humanity. On
 this principle then, there is reason to be-
 lieve that the present bill will not, on the
 whole, be injurious to the merchant; but
 even the contrary supposition is not a suf-
 ficient argument against it; for the legis-
 lature is not bound to uphold commercial
 profit at the expense of humanity and
 justice. “ But the French, our ancient
 “ and inveterate rivals (says the counsel)
 “ will possess themselves of the trade which
 “ you relinquish, and will thus succeed to
 “ one of the principal branches of your
 “ naval strength, as well as of your com-
 “ merce.” Does then the counsel con-
 ceive us so ill informed on the subject, as
 not to know that the trade to Africa has
 invariably proved, not the nursery, but
 the grave of the British seamen; and that
 the number of our countrymen, who are
 yearly sacrificed to this dreadful traffick,
 constitutes such a waste of life as no com-
 mercial gain is able to compensate? In
 this view of the subject then, we have no
 reason to dread the industry and enterpris-
 ing

ing spirit of the French ; but should we admit that in a mercantile view the national value of the African trade is such as the counsel has described, what proofs has he brought that in consequence of the present bill that trade will be given to our rivals ? Is he not aware, that of the 30,000 Africans whom our ships annually convey, more than one half is sold for the use of our own West India settlements ? That moiety therefore, if we choose to retain the trade, is beyond the reach of hazard ; for admitting that the restraints proposed should diminish the number of negroes transported in each vessel, and that the price required by the merchant for those whom he does convey, should, for this reason, be somewhat raised, it follows indeed that the cost to the British planter may be greater than at present, but it does not follow, nor is it in any respect true, that the merchants of France can seize upon the commerce. Nothing is in question then but that part of the trade, the least considerable of the two,
which

which is carried on for the supply of the foreign plantations in the West Indies ; and even that part of it, if the advantage of a reduced mortality be weighed, is exposed to no other diminution than that which, independently of this bill, may arise from the exorbitant premiums which, at this time, are given by the French government for the encouragement of its trade to Africa.

Hitherto I have argued on the supposition of the counsel, that the trade to Africa will continue to receive the countenance and protection of the French ; but there is reason to think that let the ultimate decision of the British legislature on this hideous traffick be what it may, its existence among the French will speedily be abolished. Already the best and most respectable part of their great community, all their philosophers, all their men of science, all their literary men, are earnest in their wishes for its extinction ; and two of the greatest ministers her government

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has ever known, Turgot and Neckar, have recorded their fixed abhorrence of its cruelty and guilt. A noble lord, whose judgment on this subject is undoubtedly the reverse of theirs, smiles, I observe, at the mention of literary men ; but allow me to tell him, that their influence is great in a country *in which the empire of opinion is all things* : already have we seen them accomplishing more difficult events than the abolition of a traffick, which is not less disgusting to the reason than hateful to the feelings of our nature ; a traffick which exists but by human suffering, and the gains of which are constantly polluted with blood. Has the noble lord forgotten the success with which, in the persons of the two great men I have mentioned, they opposed the authority of science to the sternness of power, and the rectitude of philosophy to the corruptions of a court ? Does he not know that they have actually effected what none but themselves have at any time ventured to attempt ; for within the domains of a cruel religion,

they

they alone have erected an altar to Mercy ? Does he not know *that they alone* have instructed their countrymen to assert their violated rights, and reclaim their ancient constitution ? Does he not know that *to them* it is owing, that at this very hour, to the astonishment of Europe, the voice of freedom is heard in the inmost recesses of the palace. Again I repeat, that let *Britain* determine as she will, the guilt and infamy of this traffick will not long be endured in *France*.

Thus I have considered the various objections that have been stated to the bill, and am ashamed to reflect that it could be necessary to speak so long in defence of such a cause : For what after all is asked by the proposed regulations ?—*On the part of the Africans*, the whole of their purport is, that those whom you allow to be robbed of all things *but life*, may not unnecessarily and wantonly be deprived of *life too*.—*On the part of your seamen* all that is suggested is, that after they have

hazarded their lives in your service, and fought the battles of their country, you would not, when poverty compels them to accept a birth in an African ship, allow them to be exposed to useless danger, or be consigned to unnecessary death.

To the honour, to the wisdom, to the feelings of the House, I now make my appeal, perfectly confident that you will not *tolerate as senators* a traffick, which *as men, you shudder to contemplate*; and that you will not take upon yourselves the responsibility of this waste of existence.— To the memory of former parliaments the horrors of this traffick will be an eternal reproach; yet *former parliaments* have not known, as *you*, on the clearest evidence, now know, the dreadful nature of this trade. Should you reject this bill, no exertion of yours to rescue from oppression the suffering inhabitants of your eastern empire; no records of the prosperous state, to which, after a long and unsuccessful war, you have restored your
native

native land ; no proofs, however splendid, that, under your guidance, Great Britain has recovered her rank, and is again the arbitress of nations, will save your names from the stigma of everlasting dishonour. The broad mantle of this one infamy will cover with substantial blackness the radiance of your glory, and change to feelings of abhorrence the present admiration of the world.—Pardon the supposition of so impossible an event. I know that justice and mercy are the constant attributes of your character, and that the lustre of their brightness is such as will endure for ever.



active, and in good honest phlegm,
that, under your guidance, (I am certain)
has recovered his rank, and is again the
pride of his race. Will you not raise
from the ranks of every day
The best of the army, the one infantry
will, cover with its shield the
ranks of your army, and change to
factors of tomorrow the present adan-
tious, the world, and the Japan-
ese, of the world, I know
that the army are the most ar-
dent, and that the
allies of their interests is such as will

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O B S E R V A T I O N S

ON THE

E V I D E N C E

GIVEN AT THE BAR OF THE

H O U S E O F C O M M O N S

T O T H E

C O M M I T T E E O N T H E B I L L

F O R

P R O V I D I N G C E R T A I N T E M P O R A R Y R E G U L A T I O N S

R E S P E C T I N G T H E

Transportation of African Slaves.

L O N D O N.

PRINTED BY J. PHILLIPS, GEORGE YARD, LOMBARD-STREET:

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EVIDENCE

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE



PROCEEDING CERTAIN LEGISLATIVE REVISIONS

RESPECTING THE

Transportation of African Slaves.

BY

JOHN H. B. ...

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EVIDENCE, &c.

IT was the wish of those who opposed the bill in question to prove 1st, That it was *unnecessary*; by shewing, that the present mode of conveying the negroes is well adapted to preserve not only life, but health—and 2dly, That it would be *ruin*, not *regulation* to the trade; if the ships should be restrained from taking at least two full grown slaves, or three small ones, to each ton of their burthen.—As much
exertion

exertion was used, and many witnesses were called, to establish the truth of these assertions, it may at first appear strange that the bill should have been passed without the production of any evidence professedly in support of it, except the report of Mr. Parrey, who was sent down to Liverpool to examine the vessels employed in the trade ; but all surprize will immediately cease on a slight attention to the allegations of its opponents ; the majority of which made directly against their own cause, and of those which seemed to favour it, many were positively contradicted by Mr. Parrey's testimony, and more by their own.

The degree of credit due to their assertions would be most completely ascertained by accurately attending to the whole of the business ; but a tolerable judgment may be formed from a few specimens relating to one point, which for this purpose, more than on account of their intrinsic importance, are here introduced.

In

In support of their first position, one of the witnesses alledged,

That the African slave ships are *peculiarly constructed* for carrying a large number of persons: having small holds, and much space between decks—that the height between decks deemed sufficient to admit of platforms*, is five feet four inches and upwards; that vessels under the burthen of 200 tons, in general have not platforms: and that those which have them not, take fewer slaves in proportion than those which are furnished with them.

On the contrary, Mr. Parrey's account informs us,

That of 26 vessels employed in the

* Platforms are a kind of shelves about six feet broad, erected against the ship's sides between decks, and projecting horizontally toward the middle of the ship—the height is thus divided in two, and after the whole floor of the deck is covered with slaves, they are laid in a second tier on these shelves almost from stem to stern.

trade

trade which he saw, ten only were built expressly for the purpose—that of the nine he measured, the average height between decks was but 5 feet 2 inches—of the four smallest, 4 feet 8 inches only—that these four were under 200 tons, and yet all had platforms, either wholly or in part—and that the only two vessels in which they were partly deficient, had cargoes fully equal in number to the general average, by their own report; though one of them was but 4 feet 2 inches high between decks.

Any comment is unnecessary.

With respect to the accommodation of the slaves and crew when on board, from comparing the different relations, the truth appears to be nearly as follows, viz.

That the whole space between decks is most frequently appropriated to the full grown slaves, who are usually kept below 15 or 16 hours of the 24 during the time
they

they are on board—often in rainy weather, not brought up for two or three days or more; which, when the ship is full, is in the highest degree distressing and unwholesome—that the men are in irons as long as they remain on the coast, i. e. for six weeks or six months as it may happen.—That the boys and girls are scattered about the ship, in the cabin, * fore-castle, or deck, or on a kind of platforms suspended over the deck.—That the usual lodging of the seamen is on deck also, defended from the weather only by temporary awnings or the platforms above-mentioned.—Much was said to induce the belief of a particular apartment being allotted to the sick, but by the variety of inconsistent accounts respecting it, the fact was rendered extremely dubious, if not totally incredible. As to the space actually allowed to each individual, this being the point on which they were most guarded, it was found impossible to obtain decisive answers upon it, either as to fact or opi-

* Very few ships have any.

nion.—It was not however difficult to discover that the only general rule of stowage is, to place them as close as they can lie, both on the floor of the deck, and on the platforms.

Of the mortality attached to this horrid traffick, what must be thought, when we find it stated as the opinion of *their own* witnesses, corroborated by *their own* accounts of 35 voyages mentioned in the evidence, that the average, *during the middle passage only*, amounts to 6 per cent. Of about 40,000 negroes therefore, who are annually dragged away from Africa in British ships, we learn *from their carriers*, that *not less* than 2400 perish during a voyage of six or eight weeks. In addition to which number must be taken, those lost by disease and accident during the stay of the ships on the coast, and those who die after their arrival in the islands of disorders contracted on board.*—

* It is a fact *in evidence* that three or four per cent. often die in the interval between the ships reporting and landing their cargoes.

The indignant sorrow which such an account must excite in every humane mind, is yet aggravated by the farther information, that by a proper attention to all favourable circumstances, much of this might be avoided; for in several of the voyages alluded to, the loss has not exceeded one per cent.—which affords the strongest presumption that this *enormous* destruction of the species is no less unnecessary than inhuman, and is greatly if not intirely owing to the improper modes of stowage and treatment which were at first suggested by avarice, are supported by established usage only, and can be practised by none who are not devoid of the common feelings of humanity.

Incredible however as it may seem, it was gravely asserted by some of the witnesses, that from the usual practice in these points, no inconvenience whatever was found to arise; that the degrees of sickness and mortality were wholly unconnected with, and independent

pendent on it ; nay even, that 450 slaves, packed in a vessel of 200 tons, would have an equal chance for life and health with 200 in another ship of similar dimensions ; and this, under all the known circumstances of confinement in rainy weather, equinoctial heats with a very moderate allowance of water, and of their being subject to a variety of inflammatory and contagious disorders. To combat by *argument*, assertions so repugnant to the common sense of mankind, so *necessarily untrue*, would be to exceed their own absurdity ; but if any refutation be wanting, a most complete one may be collected from others of their own witnesses, who inform us in direct opposition to these fictions ; that they always endeavour to procure fast sailing vessels to shorten the voyages, because the negroes are liable to all those disorders which usually arise among those crowded together in ships ; and, beyond these, to *more* inconveniences than other people. That the space in which they are stowed
does,

does, no doubt, operate in some degree : that it would be absurd to pretend that a voyage with a great number would be quite so healthy as one with but few : that small ships are most healthy, because they are less time on the coast, and have fewer on board ; and that when ships short of their usual compliment have appeared equally sickly, the reason has been, that the deficiency in their numbers arose from a competition in the market, or a small supply of slaves, by which they were detained a longer time on the coast in completing their cargo ; and lastly, from the account they delivered in of several voyages, we are enabled not only to establish the general position, that *ceteris paribus*, the mortality will be greater as the allowance of space is less ; but we also find that the principle applies to almost every particular instance with an exactness scarcely to be credited. By the same authority we are told, that the loss of seamen is about 10 per cent. in each voyage ; were this the utmost extent of it,

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the consideration would be truly alarming; but we know with deep regret, that even exclusive of peculiar fatalities, the general average loss is far greater; of which the proof is but too certain.

On the second point to which the evidence was directed, viz. 'That the proposed regulation would be in fact abolition,' it will be found unnecessary to dwell long. Of every witness it was asked nearly in the same words—'Is it your opinion that the trade can be carried on *at all*, if less than two full grown slaves be allowed to a ton, three small ones to be reckoned as two only? The uniform answer from every one was, '*That it could not*; that any restriction below that point would *infallibly be abolition.*'

After these *positive* and *re-iterated* assertions, it will surely be thought extraordinary that here again, they should have furnished every needful document for their
own

own confutation.—For in examining into the particulars which they produced of 19 vessels, 14 of them *under 200 tons*, it appeared that of the whole number, five only had cargoes equal to the proportion they state as *necessary to the existence of the trade* (viz. two grown slaves to a ton)—and the other 14 fell so much short of it, as that *the average of the whole 19* was but $1\frac{1}{3}$ —or 10 per cent. below their *lowest* standard!—When the assertion and the proof are thus at variance, which would the gentlemen wish us to believe?

I shall not on this occasion dilate on the general impolicy, the fundamental injustice, the universal inhumanity, or the particular barbarities which are either interwoven into the very constitution, or consequent on the practice, of this nefarious traffick: but before I conclude, I cannot refrain from making two reflections which immediately arise from this particular view of the subject.—Allowing every slave to *be obtained* by the least objection-

able mode, I suppose it will not be contended that the right in him so acquired extends either to deprivation of life, or to wanton ill treatment ; or that such slave can be considered otherwise than as perfectly innocent with respect to his purchaser. Is there then no crime in subjecting thousands and millions of such persons to a confinement, loathsome, rigorous, and destructive ; in comparison with which, that of a felon in England is salubrious and easy——of whose fatal severity it is at once an irrefragable proof, and a dreadful illustration, that its continuance but for a single year, would send at least half its wretched objects to the grave ?* This is surely a very serious consideration ; and there is yet another perhaps not less important : Those who possess but a moderate share of that philanthropy which embraces the interests and happiness of human kind, are apt to wonder how the

* For a more particular explanation of the mode of fixing the slaves, the Reader is referred to the Plan and Description of a Slave Ship, published by the Printer.

idea, at once so barbarous and so degrading, of trafficking in our own species, could be endured among any but savages. How pernicious and debasing then, must be the influence of this practice on the noblest dispositions of the heart, when, in this enlightened age and country, persons whom affluence deprives of the plea of necessity, and who cannot without insult be supposed uneducated in the principles of moral duty, can not only persevere without remorse in a trade the evils of which they both occasion and confess, but can defend it without shame; and exhibit in that defence with equal coolness, accounts of the average *profit*, or the average *mortality*, of a voyage. Mortality, not of sheep or oxen, but of *men*, bought for their profit, and dying perhaps through their neglect!—And can do all this, apparently *unconscious*, certainly *regardless*, of the grossness of the outrage on the common sense and common feelings of mankind.

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idea, at once so barbarous and so degrading, of trafficking in our own species, could be endured among any but savages. How pernicious and debasing then, must be the influence of this practice on the noblest dispositions of the heart, when, in this enlightened age and country, persons whom affluence deprives of the plea of necessity, and who cannot without insult be supposed unacquainted in the principles of moral duty, can not only persevere without remorse in trade the evils of which they both occasion and contest, but can defend it without shame; and exhibit in their defence with equal coolness, accounts of the average price, or the average morality, of a voyage. Morality, not of ships or men, but of war, bought for their profit and dying perhaps through their neglect. And can do all this, apparently unmoved, certainly regardless, at the groans of the sufferers, the common sense and common feelings of mankind.

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THE END

